



BOYS AT PRAYATNA (OUR VOCATIONAL TRAINING UNIT) POSING IN THE GARDEN

REPORT



SRI ARUNODAYAM
Home for Mentally Challenged Destitute

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We've launched our Organic Vegetable Shop - and the neighbors are loving it!

Prayatna's Story...

In 2012, we opened *Prayatna* - which means 'a good effort' - in an attempt to train all our young mentally challenged adults (above the age of 18) and provide them with the skills to sustain a trade.

This training became a form of occupational therapy, helping them develop the necessary interactive social skills for their emotional wellbeing.

Prayatna offers training in book binding, paper bag making, candle making, envelope making, and household items such as rugs, aprons, bags and more. All the products are sold to visitors and to the immediate neighborhood.

Organic Cultivation Project

Prayatna recently opened an organic vegetable shop which sells produce from our own kitchen garden! At Sri Arunodayam, nothing goes to waste. The vegetable peels from our kitchen become manure for the garden.

We are teaching the boys all about organic methods of cultivation.

They plan which crops to grow; how to rotate them; what fertilizers to use; how to keep pests away; how to provide good nutrition to the plants; how to identify good insects from the pests; how to water to avoid stressing the plants, orchard hygiene; and more – depending upon their ability to assimilate such learnings.

Giving back to society

You can see the boys alongside, working to till the ground. They love gardening and refuse to sit idle, preferring to be at the vocational center, or in the garden, or at the shop.

At the shop, they get to interact with customers, converse, sell, and have good discussions. The people are impressed with the look and taste of the produce. In this sheltered environment, our boys are making progress every day and can look forward to a fruitful life ahead.

And the good news is that ever since we began harvesting the garden, our vegetable vendor bills have almost halved!

